

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) Customer premises equipment (CPE) apparatus
Apparatus comprising:

a first port adapted for interfacing with connection to a telecommunication network via plain-old-telephone-service (POTS) signaling format;

a plurality of POTS CPE ports adapted for connection to a POTS CPE; ✓

a switch interposed between said first port and said POTS CPE ports; } 112

a control module, responsive to one or more special messages originating at a central office and received via said first port, for affecting said switch based on information contained in said one or more special service messages, where said special messages belong to a finite set that includes called party ID message, and alert signal, those being distinct elements of the set, and excludes caller ID message; and

a signaling detection module responsive to an off-hook condition at said POTS CPE port for applying an off-hook detection signal to said control module.

112 } 113

2. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 where, said control module causes delivery of a message to one of said POTS CPE ports, where said message is taken from a set that includes an alert message.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein said one or more special service messages are embedded in an alert signal.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 3 wherein said alert signal contains ringing signal bursts within a ringing cycle.

5. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said control module includes an associated memory, and affects said switch based on information stored in said memory and information contained in said one or more special service messages.

6. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim **5** further comprising a time-of-day clock coupled to said second control module, to assist said control module to affect said switch.

7. (Previously Amended) The apparatus of claim **1** where said signaling detection module operates to cause said control module to establish a connection between said first port and one of said POTS CPE ports when said signaling detection module determines an off-hook condition at said one of said POTS CPE ports.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim **1** wherein a special service message comprises a coded ringing signal.

9. (Previously Amended) The apparatus of claim **1** further comprising a ringing signal generator responsive to said second module, for applying a ringing signal to one or more of said POTS CPE ports.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim **9** where said ringing signal is a coded ringing signal.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim **9** where said ringing signal is coded to indicate

(a) whether said special service messages indicate that a connection with said apparatus is sought to be established to a called number that is listed in a directory that is accessible to everyone,

(b) whether said special service messages indicate that a connection with said apparatus is sought to be established to a called number that is unlisted in said directory,

(c) whether said special service messages indicate the calling number that seeks to establish a connection with said apparatus,

(d) time of day, or

(e) type of call.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 where said type of call is taken from a set that includes collect call, cellular calls, international calls, fax calls, modem calls, and credit card calls.

13. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for performing electronic selection actions in response to receipt of called number signal arriving at a first POTS network port from a telecommunication network prior to establishment of a connection between said apparatus and said telecommunication network, comprising:

a first control module coupled to said two terminals POTS network port for decoding said called number information, which is embedded in said alerting signal;

a plurality of POTS CPE ports;

AB a switch interposed between said first port and said POTS CPE ports;

AB a second module, responsive to said first module, for controlling state of said switch; and

a signaling detection module responsive an off-hook condition at one of said POTS CPE ports for applying an off-hook detection signal to said second module.

14. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said called number information is embedded in an alerting signal that is in the form of ringing signal bursts within a ringing cycle.

15. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 13 further comprising a display responsive to said control module.

16. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 13 further comprising an off hook detector connected to said first port, for applying an off-hook detection signal to said control module.

LAB **17. (Currently Amended)** The apparatus of claim 13 where said control module detects called number information in said special service message.

18. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 4 **13** where said special service message is in the form of digital information preceding, or following a first ringing signal burst.

19. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 4 **13** wherein said control module compares information decoded from said special service message to one or more pre-stored numbers within said control module.

20. (Previously Amended) The apparatus of claim **19** where said control module detects a special service message that includes a number to be stored, and causes said second module to store said number so as to include said stored number among said one or more pre-stored numbers.

21. (Original) The apparatus of claim **20** where said number to be stored arrives at said second module in the same signaling format that all other special service messages have.

22. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 4 **13** further comprising a second signaling ~~detector~~ detection module, responsive to signals from any one of said POTS CPE ports, for receiving a number to be stored in said control module.

23. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim **22** where said second signaling ~~detector~~ detection module is responsive to DTMF or pulse signaling from said CPE.

24. (Delete) The apparatus of claim **1** further comprising a hardware address.

25. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim **1** wherein said special service messages indicate

(a) whether a connection with said apparatus is sought to be established to a called number that is listed in a directory that is accessible to everyone,

- (b) whether a connection with said apparatus is sought to be established to a called number that is unlisted in said directory,
- (c) the calling number that seeks to establish a connection with said apparatus,
- (d) time of day, or
- (d[e]) type of call.

26. (Original) The apparatus of claim 25 wherein said type of call is taken from a set that includes collect call, cellular calls, international calls, fax calls, modem calls, and credit card calls.

27. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for performing electronic selection actions in response to receipt of one or more special service messages, said special service messages arriving at a first port prior to establishment of a connection between said apparatus and a telecommunication network, comprising:

a first module coupled to said first port for receiving from said first port a non-multiplexed baseband signal which, inter alia, is adapted to carry an alert signal and said special service messages and for decoding said special service messages, which messages belong to a set that includes called party ID and excludes caller ID;

a plurality of POTS CPE ports;

a plurality of switches, separate from each other, with each switch interposed between said first port and one of said POTS CPE ports; and

a second module, responsive to said first module, for controlling state of said switches based on information contained in said special service message.

28. (Previously Amended) The apparatus of claim 27 further comprising a signaling detection module responsive an off-hook condition at any one of said POTS CPE ports for applying an off-hook detection signal to said second module.

29. (Original) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein at least one of said switches is a normally closed switch.

30. (Original) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein at least one of said switches is a normally open switch.

31. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for performing electronic selection actions in response to receipt of called number ID arriving at a first port prior to establishment of a connection between said apparatus and a telecommunication network comprising:

a first module coupled to said first port for decoding special service messages embedded in said alerting signal, said first port having two terminals, and said first module adapted to respond to POTS signals;

a series connection of a ringer and a ringer switch, across said two terminals first port,

a series connection of telephone circuitry and a hook switch, across said two terminals; and

a processor, responsive to said first module, for controlling state of said ringer switch.

32. (Currently Amended) A method for responding to an alert signal that contains an embedded called number ID in an alerting signal comprising the steps of:

identifying said called number ID in said alerting signal;

comparing said called number ID to at least one pre-stored number;

ascertaining whether at least one other call attribute is met from a set of attributes that includes caller ID, time of day, date, and type of call; and

applying ringing signal bursts to a POTS CPE port when said at least one other call attribute is met and said called number ID matches one of said at least one pre-stored numbers.

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34. (Delete) .

35. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[34]] 32 wherein said type of call is taken from a set that includes collect call, cellular calls, international calls, fax calls, modem calls, and credit card calls.

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